

Mission: Assure Oral Health for Kentucky

We believe:

- Oral health is an integral part of an overall preventive health lifestyle.
- Oral health is an essential component of overall health.
- Professional oral care is an important part of the health care delivery system.
- Access to care is essential.
- The pursuit of health is a right.
- Oral health is an economic development issue.
- People have a personal responsibility for their own wellness.
- We all (the community) have a responsibility to promote health in our communities.
- The profession has an obligation to work toward the improvement of oral health for all.
- Prevention is the "cornerstone" of community health.
- Oral health is achievable.
- Oral health education is important in the training of all health care providers and oral health consumer education is imperative.
- Poverty is a barrier to oral health and access.
- Oral health problems are systemic societal problems.
- Oral Health primary prevention should start early in life.
- Children's oral health is a foundation for a healthy lifetime.

Oral Health Education

Local health department nurses, dental hygienists, health educators and dentists educate parents, caregivers and children about the importance of oral health to overall health, the importance of primary teeth and how to properly care for children's teeth.

For the past three years, the Kentucky's Children's Librarians have partnered with the KOHP to provide oral health education during National Children's Dental Health Month. These activities have included visits by dentists and the Tooth Fairy, demonstration of proper brushing and flossing, oral health information, story hours with dental themes and activities and distribution of toothbrushes and toothpaste for children attending an oral health education program at the libraries.



Garrard County Library Story Hour



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Kentucky Oral Health Program



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*Healthy Kentucky
Smiles: A Lifetime of
Oral Health*

The Kentucky Oral Health Program (KOHP)

has a long and proud history with the Department for Public Health. When Kentucky established a dental health program in 1928, it was the third state in the nation to have a public dental health program.

Community Fluoridation

One of KOHP's major efforts is in municipal fluoridation. In 1951, Maysville became the first community in Kentucky to fluoridate its water supply and fluoridation has continued successfully. Today approximately 96% of our citizens are on a fluoridated water supply, making Kentucky a national leader. Optimally fluoridated community water systems have proven to prevent tooth decay by up to 60%.



In Kentucky, fluoridation is mandatory (KRS 211.190; KAR 902.115.010) for community water supplies serving a population of 1,500 or more. Community water supplies serving a

population of less than 1,500 may voluntarily fluoridate. In 1994, KOHP became responsible for the enforcement of fluoride regulations. Program staff work closely with water plants through monitoring and technical assistance. In 2000, 99.2% of the 217 fluoridated communities were fluoridated at an optimum level.

Rural School Fluoridation Program

This program began in 1975. Its purpose is to provide fluoridated water to school children living in rural areas not served by a



fluoridated water supply. This is done by installing equipment to add fluoride to the school's water supply. Schools in this program participate on a voluntary basis. As fluoridated water lines have been extended into rural areas, the number of schools in need of this program has diminished.

Fluoride Supplement Program

Kentucky began its fluoride supplement program in 1978. This program primarily serves children ages 6 months to 6 years old whose home water supply is low in fluoride. Providers are county health departments, private dentists and physicians. The provider assesses the child's drink-



ing water supply. If it is not from a known fluoridated water source (e.g. city water), a water sample kit is issued to the family and a sample is sent to the state laboratory for analysis. If the water is low in fluoride, supplementation may be required. Dosage is based on the level of fluoride in the water and the child's age in accordance with Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines. Because providers receive supplements and testing supplies free of charge to their offices, there is no cost to families to participate in this program.

KIDS SMILE: Fluoride Varnish Program

Beginning in 2003, the KIDS SMILE: Fluoride Varnish Program was initiated by local health department nurses who had attended and participated in the KIDS SMILE: Fluoride Varnish trainings. Since then, KIDS SMILE: Fluoride Varnish trainings have been held at 23 regional training sites to approximately 1,400 health department nurses and other community providers. Oral Health Staff provided over 45,000 pre-packed fluoride varnish kits to participating local health departments as well as clinical service sites of Kentucky's Commission for Children with Special Health Care Needs. In FY 07, a total of 31,103

services (including oral health screenings and fluoride varnish applications) were provided to children by local health department and Commission nurses.

Kentucky Sealant Program

In 2002, the sealant program began with 18 health departments. Currently, 23 local health departments participate in this statewide program. Kentucky's sealant programs follow the recognized pattern of identifying children at high risk for dental caries in schools where a large percentage ($\geq 50\%$) of children are eligible for free or reduced-cost lunch programs. Originally, the sealant programs partnered with local dentists, hygienists, and local elementary schools to provide dental sealants to children in the 2nd, 3rd, and 6th grades. Since the inception of the program, at least 2 local health departments have hired dental hygienists to coordinate their programs, provide sealants in schools, and be reimbursed by Medicaid or KCHIP.



Emerging Issues

Kentucky's Oral Health Program is moving forward to bring optimum oral health status to each of its citizens. The oral health-general health link is becoming more evident through research and the KOHP will continue to work with policy makers, universities, health departments, government bodies and the private sector to insure access for dental care to all Kentuckians.

Contact your local health departments regarding the oral health services listed in this brochure.